Kokborok and the simple-complex reflexive distinction

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This paper presents an in-depth investigation of the binding strategies in Kokborok and we will look more specifically how this sheds light on the theories of reflexivization. Kokborok, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Tripura, a state in the North-East of India, has two reflexives: *sak sak* 'self self' and *sak baithaŋ* 'self self'. The form *sak sak* 'self self' conforms to Principle A of classic Binding Theory, blocking long-distance binding, but this does not hold true for *sak baithaŋ* allowing non-local binding. It is a well-established fact that some reflexives allow non-local binding, but it is generally assumed that this phenomenon is limited to a certain type of reflexive, morpho-syntactically 'simple reflexives.' The so-called 'complex reflexives' generally bar non-local binding, and the Kokborok reflexive *sak baithaŋ* seems an exception to that. This paper explores the uniqueness involved in the nature of anaphoric binding in Kokborok.

Keywords: simple reflexive, complex reflexive, long-distance binding, binding theory, reduplication

1. Introduction

As discussed in Subbārāo (2012), South Asian Languages (SALs), generally, obey the three classic binding principles described in Chomsky (1981), of which Binding Principle A (cf. (1)) is the one relevant in this context:

(1) A reflexive must be bound by an antecedent in its governing category where the antecedent c-commands the reflexive.

Take, for instance the Hindi-Urdu example in (2) (from Davison 2001):[1]

(2) *mērī$_i$-ne   apne$_{i/*j}$ (āp)-se   bāt kī.*
     Mary-ERG self's   self-with talk do.PERF
     'Mary$_i$ talked with herself$_{i/*j}$.'   (Gurtu 1992: 23)

Davison observes that the complex reflexive form *apne āp* is preferred, but the simple form *apne* is also possible. She also observes that non-local binding is allowed (cf. (3)), albeit only in certain domains as described in detail in Davison (2001):

(3) *sītā$_i$-ne   rām$_j$-ko   apne$_{i/j}$-ko /apne āp$_{*i/j}$-ko dēkh-ne ke   liyē majbūr kiya.*
     sita-ERG ram-DAT self-dat   /self's self-DAT see-INF GEN for force   do.PERF
     'Sita$_i$ forced Ram$_j$ to look at self: apne$_{i/j}$ /apne āp$_{*i/j}$.'   (Davison 2001: 47)

Such observations – we refer the reader to the overviews in Reuland (2017b) and Charnavel et al. (2017) – have led to a shift in binding theory approaches. We will not go into great detail explaining these theories because the issues we want to address are, to some extent, independent from specific approaches.

Both wide-ranging studies discussing the binding strategies in South Asian languages, such as Lust et al. (2000) and Subbārāo (2012), and studies on individual languages, such as Wali & Subbārāo (1991); Wali (2000), and Everaert et. al. (2014), have argued that for those languages that distinguish two types of reflexives, the more complex one does not license non-local binding. The example in (3) is an illustration of this generalization since out of the two reflexives (*apne āp* and *apne*) only the 'simple reflexive' *apne* can be bound by the non-local antecedent. This reflects a commonly held position that, cross-linguistically, complex reflexives are barred from long-distance binding (Koster & Reuland 1991; Cole et al. 2001). But note that non-local/long-distance binding of complex reflexives in South Asian languages (SALs) is documented. In Malayalam[2] (see Jayaseelan 1997), and in Marathi (see Wali 2000: 534 and Subbārāo 2012: 76–77), long-distance binding of complex reflexives is permitted thereby leading to Principle A violation.[3]

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1. All examples without stated source are based on own knowledge/fieldwork.

2. Although not widely accepted.

3. Note that reciprocals seem to behave like complex reflexives in not allowing long distance binding (Everaert 2008), even in Marathi, where complex reflexives do seem to allow long distance binding (Wali 2000).

This paper will discuss the behaviour of the two reflexives *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ* in Kokborok.[4] If we would classify these reflexives as 'complex', their behaviour is partly unexpected: *sak sak* indeed does not allow non-local binding, but *sak baithaŋ* violates the constraint that 'complex reflexives' don't license non-local binding. We will try to shed light on this issue by addressing, in Section 5, the issue as to how we need to define 'complex' in this context.

The paper is divided into five sections. Section 2 gives a brief description of some relevant observations in South Asian languages. Section 3 presents the morphological structure of the forms of reflexives in Kokborok. Section 4 illustrates the distribution of both simple and complex reflexives and demonstrates their binding properties in both local and long-distance domains. Finally, in Section 5, we will discuss how one could account for the different behaviour of the two complex reflexives in Kokborok.

2.   Reflexives in South Asian languages

Lust et al. (2000) and Subbārāo (2012) present an extensive study on the binding strategies of South Asian Languages (SALs). In this section, we present some relevant observations, to show in the later sections how binding strategies in Kokborok stand distinct from many other SALs.

2.1   The two types of nominal reflexives

South Asian languages exhibit both simple and complex reflexives. A 'simple reflexive' is a bare noun constituent as the Hindi-Urdu example in (4) and the 'complex reflexive' consists of a bipartite structure whose component may or may

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4.   Data were collected from native speakers of Kokborok residing in Tripura. The Bodo and Garo data were collected from Mr. Sansuma Brahma from Assam and Dr. Dokatchi Marak from Meghalaya, respectively. The initial field trip took place in January and February 2016. After that, in the course of 2016, data were rechecked and cross-checked in several short field trips. At a later stage (December 2018), some informants were consulted via telephone/email.

The informants belong to different age groups: ranging from 18 to above 70 years. Kokborok data have been elicited from three different communities: Jamatia, Koloi, and Debbarma. The Debbarma variety is considered the standard form of Kokborok. The primary language consultants are Mr. Bosong Jamatia, Mr. Mukthang Koloi, Mr. Naresh Debbarma, and Mr. Manik Debbarma and several anonymous people of local markets in Agartala and the suburbs – Lalshing Murha (Shipahijala district), Bishalgarh, Belonia – and 6–7 class XI students of St. Paul's school, Agartala. All our informants were born and brought up in Tripura.

not be identical (Subbārāo 2012: 45). Example (5) shows the non-identical constituents of the complex reflexive *apne āp* in Hindi-Urdu.

(4) *rām-ne apne-ko aine-mē dekh-ā.*
     ram-ERG self-ACC mirror-in see-PERF
     'Ram saw himself in the mirror.'

(5) *rām-ne apne   āp-ko   aine-mē dekh- ā.*
     ram-ERG self.GEN self-ACC mirror-in see-PERF
     'Ram saw himself in the mirror.'

In contrast, Example (6), from (Sarju Devi & Subbārāo 2002) shows that the component parts of the 'complex reflexive' *i-sa i-sa* in Manipuri are identical. In Manipuri, the first part of the reflexive is nominative case-marked which is an instance of case copying (copying the case of the subject) and the second part takes the accusative case assigned by the verb *thagat* 'praise' in (6a). Moreover, Manipuri allows the two component parts to be swapped (6b); a feature that can be observed in some other SALs, cf. Sarju Devi & Subbārāo (2002):

(6) a. *ai-na i-sa-na   i-sa-bu   thagat-i*
         I-NOM I-self-NOM I-self-ACC praise-FUT
     b. *ai-na i-sa-bu   i-sa-na   thagat-i*
         I-NOM I-self-ACC I-self-NOM praise-FUT
         'I praised myself.'

2.2 Distribution of simple and complex reflexives in SALs

Subbārāo (2012: 82) demonstrates that no South Asian language studied so far allows a complex reflexive to occur in a non-subcategorized position such as a locative PP position. A simple reflexive is the only type of reflexive permitted in both subcategorized and non-subcategorized positions. For example, the simple reflexive *apne* 'self' in Hindi-Urdu occurs in both subcategorized (cf. 7a) and non-subcategorized positions (cf. 7b); whereas, the complex reflexive *apne āp* 'self self' occurs only in a subcategorized position (cf. 8a) and its occurrence in a non-subcategorized position (cf. 8b) leads to ungrammaticality (Davison: 2000: 409; Subbārāo 2012: 82):

(7) a. *rām-ne   apne-ko aine-mē dekh-ā.*
         Ram-ERG self-ACC mirror-in see-PERF
         'Ram saw himself in the mirror.'
     b. *rām-ne   apne   nazdīk ek sarp dekh-ā.*
         Ram-ERG self.GEN near   one snake see-PERF
         'Ram saw a snake near self.'

(8) a. *rām-ne   apne   āp-ko   aine-mẽ   dekh-ā.*
         Ram-ERG self.GEN self-ACC mirror-in see-PERF
         'Ram saw himself in the mirror.'

   b. **rām-ne   apne   āp-ke   nazdīk ek   sarp   dekh-ā.*
         Ram-ERG self.GEN self-ACC near   one snake see-PERF
         Ram saw a snake near self.

The next section discusses the morphological structure of the reflexive in Kok-borok to draw the distinction between the structures of simple and complex reflexives and to discuss the distinction between the two forms of the complex reflexives.

3. Initial observations on the morpho-syntactic properties of Kokborok reflexives

3.1 Kokborok reflexives

As mentioned above, Kokborok only has nominal reflexives and they are classified into two categories: simple and complex. Both the simple and complex reflexives have two forms each. The two forms of the simple reflexive in Kokborok are as in (9a, b), and the two forms of the complex reflexive in Kokborok are as in (9c, d).

(9) a. *sak-nɔ/ni*
         REFL-ACC/GEN

   b. *baithaŋ-nɔ/ni*
         REFL-ACC/GEN

   c. *sak sak-nɔ/ni*[5]
         REFL-ACC/GEN

   d. *sak baithaŋ-nɔ/ni*
         REFL-ACC/GEN

Literally, the word *sak* in Kokborok means 'body' and *baithaŋ* means 'self'. The constituents of the complex reflexive *sak sak* are identical, perhaps a case of redu-plication. We will return to that in Section 5. On the other hand, the reflexive *sak baithaŋ* will be taken as a 'compounded phrase', supposedly meaning 'personal self' (Jacquesson 2008: 74) and, again, we will further explain this analysis in Section 5.

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5. Unlike in some other Tibeto-Burman languages, Kokborok does not have a verbal reflexive or reciprocal.

In both 'complex' forms, it is the second part that seems to receive the case of the position it occupies, which is either accusative or genitive. In *sak sak*, the second *sak* exhibits the case inflection and in *sak baithaŋ*, it is *baithaŋ* that exhibits the case inflection. Importantly, swapping of the constituent parts of the complex reflexives seems to be not permitted in Kokborok:[6]

(10) a. *sak sak-nɔ*   **sak-nɔ sak*
      b. *sak sak-ni*   **sak-ni sak*
      c. *sak baithaŋ-nɔ* **sak-nɔ baithaŋ*
      d. *sak baithaŋ-ni* **sak-ni baithaŋ*

We will return to this issue in Section 5.

3.2   Kokborok reflexives functioning as emphatic forms

Reflexive forms can also function as emphatic markers in Kokborok, as in many other languages (König & Siemund 2000). Unlike the reflexives, the emphatic forms do not take any inflection of case. The following forms show the emphatic forms in Kokborok.

(11) a. *baithaŋ*
      b. *sak baithaŋ*
      c. *sak sak*
      d. *aŋ baithaŋ/sak baithaŋ/sak sak biliŋ-ɔ   thaŋ-kha.*
          I   EMPH   forest-in go-PST
          'I myself went to the forest.'

The simple form *sak*[7] does not occur as an emphatic marker (cf. (12)), whereas *baithaŋ* does (cf. (13)). It is not immediately clear why. One might say that it has to do with the fact that *sak* in bare form literally means 'body', while *baithaŋ* in bare form means 'self'. However, it has been argued that intensifiers typically develop from expressions for body parts (König & Siemund 2000). So, from that perspective, it is not obvious as to why bare *sak* is not allowed (but see also fn 6). In (14),

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6. The accusative marker is *-nɔ* and genitive is *-ni* as mentioned above; the nominative marker is zero.

7. For some native speakers of Kokborok *sak* in bare form can occur as an emphatic marker as in (i). Use of *sak* as an emphatic marker is, apparently, subject to dialectal variation.

(i) *khumti sak   biliŋ-ɔ   thaŋ-kha.*
     Khumti EMPH forest-in go-PST
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

we observe that the reduplicated form *sak sak* occurs as an emphatic form. In the presence of the corresponding reflexive *sak sak*, however, it is not permitted as an emphatic form (of the subject), as shown in (15). In contrast, the complex form *sak baithaŋ* occurs as the emphatic form both in the absence (16) or presence (17) of the corresponding reflexive *sak baithaŋ*. The reflexives in the emphatic forms can occur even to the left of the subject NP (cf. (18)), whereas reflexives in principle cannot. The shift happens only because the emphatic forms are intensifiers/adverbs which take the subject NP in its scope.

(12) *[*khumti sak*] *bɨlɨŋ-ɔ* *thaŋ-kha*.
     Khumti EMPH forest-in go-PST
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

(13) [*khumti baithaŋ*] *bɨlɨŋ-ɔ* *thaŋ-kha*.
     Khumti EMPH   forest-in go-PST
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

(14) [*khumti sak sak*] *bɨlɨŋ-ɔ* *thaŋ-kha*.
     Khumti EMPH   forest-in go-PST
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

(15) *[*mɔntri sak sak*] *sak sak-nɔ sɔkat rɨ-kha*.
     minister EMPH   REFL-ACC   prize give-PST
     'The minister himself gave the prize to himself.'

(16) [*khumti sak baithaŋ*] *bɨlɨŋ-ɔ* *thaŋ-kha*.
     Khumti EMPH   forest-in go-PST
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

(17) [*mɔntri sak baithaŋ*] *sak baithaŋ-nɔ sɔkat rɨ-kha*.
     minister EMPH   REFL-ACC   prize give-PST
     'The minister himself gave the prize to himself.'

(18) *sak baithaŋ/sak sak/baithaŋ khumti bɨlɨŋ-ɔ   thaŋ-kha*.
     EMPH   Khumti forest-in go-pst
     'Khumti herself went to the forest.'

Our informants have confirmed that the forms such as *sak sak baithaŋ, baithaŋ sak sak, sak baithaŋ sak* do not exist. The plausible reason could be that the complex reflexives *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ* do not allow simple reflexive *sak* or *baithaŋ* as the emphatic form which would either precede or follow the complex reflexives. As mentioned above, *sak* in the bare form means 'body' which is why it is not permitted in the bare form. However, it is not clear why the form *baithaŋ* which

means 'self' is not allowed with the complex reflexives. This needs further investigation.

3.3 Summary

Thus, Kokborok has two types of reflexives, simple and complex, which have two forms each. Simple reflexives are *sak* and *baithaŋ* and complex reflexives are *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ*. It is the second part of the reflexive that receives the case marking, which is either accusative *-nɔ* or genitive *-ni*. Swapping of the parts of the reflexive is not permitted in Kokborok and the forms are fixed as *sak sak-nɔ/ni* and *sak baithaŋ-nɔ/ni*. Also, there are three emphatic forms in Kokborok – *baithaŋ, sak baithaŋ*, and *sak sak* – formed out of the constituent elements of the reflexives.

4.   Binding in Kokborok

In the previous section, we discussed the morpho-syntactic properties of the simple and the complex reflexives in Kokborok and their corresponding emphatic forms. Here, we discuss the anaphoric dependencies in which reflexives in Kokborok are involved, their binding properties.

Binding means that a reflexive is referentially dependent on another constituent (its antecedent), in this paper encoded through co-indexation. Binding is of two types: local and non-local/long-distance. In local binding, the referential dependency of the noun phrases holds within the domain of the minimal clause; whereas in long-distance binding the referential dependency extends to different clausal domains. The cases of long-distance binding, we will discuss, violate Principle A of the classical binding theory (Chomsky 1981). This section illustrates both local and long-distance binding of simple and complex reflexives in Kokborok.

4.1 Local binding

Local binding refers to an anaphoric dependency between two arguments of the same clause, where the antecedent c-commands the reflexive in the local domain. The antecedent (generally) occupies the subject position of the clause and the reflexive occupies either the subcategorized or non-subcategorized position of the clause (although complex reflexives generally do not occur in a non-subcategorized position).

Examples (19)–(20) illustrate cases of simple reflexives. The examples show that the simple reflexive *sak/baithaŋ* appears both in subcategorized and non-subcategorized positions.

(19)   *khumti$_i$ sak$_i$/baithaŋ$_i$-nɔ aina-ɔ   nuk-kha*
       Khumti REFL/REFL-ACC   mirror-in see-PST
       'Khumti saw herself in the mirror.'

(20)   *khumti$_i$ sak$_i$/baithaŋ$_i$-ni gana-ɔ cibuk masa nuk-kha*
       khumti REFL/REFL-GEN near-in snake one   see-PST
       'Khumti saw a snake near herself.'

Examples (21)–(22) show that both complex reflexives *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ* are allowed in the case of subcategorized position:

(21)   *khumti$_i$ sak sak$_i$-nɔ aina-ɔ   nuk-kha.*
       Khumti REFL-ACC   mirror-in see-PST
       'Khumti saw herself in the mirror.'

(22)   *khumti$_i$ sak baithaŋ$_i$-nɔ aina-ɔ   nuk-kha.*
       Khumti REFL-ACC   mirror-in see-PST
       'Khumti saw herself in the mirror.'

As mentioned above, Subbārāo (2012: 82–83) claims that no South Asian language allows any complex reflexive in a non-subcategorized position such as a non-subcategorized locative PP-position. However, Kokborok stands as an exception in allowing one of the forms of the complex reflexive to occur in a non-subcategorized position, the complex reflexive *sak baithaŋ*, as is illustrated in (23). Interestingly, the complex reflexive *sak sak* is not permitted in a non-subcategorized position as shown in (24).

(23)   *khumti$_i$ sak baithaŋ$_i$-ni gana-ɔ cibuk-masa nuk-kha.*
       Khumti REFL-GEN   near-in snake-one   see-PST
       'Khumti saw a snake near herself.'

(24)   **khumti$_i$ sak sak$_i$-ni gana-ɔ cibuk-masa nuk-kha.*
       Khumti REFL-GEN near-in snake-one   see-PST
       'Khumti saw a snake near herself.'

Summarizing, *sak sak* occurs only in subcategorized positions, whereas *sak baithaŋ* occurs in both subcategorized and non-subcategorized positions.

4.2   Non-local binding in Kokborok

This section discusses non-local binding of simple and complex reflexives in Kokborok. Non-local/long-distance binding in this section refers to an anaphoric dependency between a reflexive in the embedded clause and its antecedent in the matrix clause, in an apparent violation of Principle A of Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981).

First, we look at small clauses. A small clause consists of a subject and a predicative adjective or a DP and is devoid of agreement, tense and, aspect morphology (Davison 2000: 420). In a small clause, the subject of the embedded clause is exceptionally (accusative) case-marked by the matrix verb as there is no case assigner within the small clause. Therefore, when the reflexive occurs as the subject of the small clause, it also gets exceptionally accusative case-marked by the matrix verb. Although the reflexive and the antecedent occur in different clausal domains (assigned a theta-role by a different predicate), binding of the reflexive within the small clause does not violate Principle A.[8]

In the Kokborok examples in (25)–(26) the antecedent is nominative case-marked and the reflexive within the small clause takes accusative case from the matrix predicate. Example (25) gives an example with the simple reflexives *sak* and *baithaŋ*; (26) and (27) with the complex reflexives *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ* respectively:

(25)   *wakhirai$_i$ sak$_i$-nɔ/baithaŋ$_i$-nɔ naithɔk iŋ-jag-ɔ.*
      Wakhirai   REFL-ACC/REFL-ACC pretty   consider-EM.PRED-PRES
      'Wakhirai considers herself pretty.'

(26)   *wakhirai$_i$ sak sak$_i$-nɔ naithɔk iŋ-jag-ɔ.*
      Wakhirai   REFL-ACC   pretty   consider-EM.PRED-PRES
      'Wakhirai considers herself pretty.'

(27)   *wakhirai$_i$ sak baithaŋ$_i$-nɔ naithɔk iŋ-jag-ɔ.*
      Wakhirai   REFL-ACC   pretty   consider-EM.PRED-PRES
      'Wakhirai considers herself pretty.'

Examples (28) and (29) illustrate the long-distance binding of the simple reflexives *sak* 'self' and *baithaŋ* 'self' in the case of full infinitival complements:

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8. This, of course, depends on the version of the Binding Theory one adopts. In the version of Chomsky (1981), small clauses do not function as a barrier to long-distance binding of the subject (of the small clause).

(28) *phiyɔgnai$_i$ khumti$_j$-nɔ*   [PRO$_j$ *sak$_{i/j}$-ni/baithaŋ$_{i/j}$-ni bagii ca sinam-nani*]
      Phiyoknai Khumti-ACC   REFL-GEN/REFL-GEN for   tea make-INF
      sa-kha.
      tell-PST
      'Phiyoknai$_i$ asked Khumti$_j$ to make tea for self$_{i/j}$.'

(29) *khumti$_i$ khumpui$_j$-nɔ*   [PRO$_j$ *sak$_{i/j}$-nɔ/baithaŋ$_{i/j}$-nɔ khicik-nani*] *sa-kha.*
      Khumti Khumpui-ACC   REFL-ACC/REFL-ACC pinch-INF   tell-PST
      'Khumti$_i$ asked Khumpui$_j$ to pinch self$_{i/j}$.'

The antecedent can either be the subject of the matrix clause or of the embedded clause (which is in a control relation with the matrix object). When the reflexive *sak* or *baithaŋ* is bound by the object of the matrix clause (*khumti* in Example (28), *khumpui* in Example (29), binding invariably occurs in the local domain as the antecedent is co-indexed with the null subject PRO of the embedded clause. However, when the antecedent is the subject of the matrix clause (*phiyɔgnai* in Example (28), *khumti* in Example (29) the anaphoric dependency violates Principle A.

4.3   Binding in a Bodo-Garo perspective

Before we discuss a possible analysis of non-local binding in Kokborok (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5), we will put the data discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 in a comparative perspective.

Kokborok belongs to the Bodo-Garo sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. Here, we present examples from its sister languages Bodo and Garo, and show that binding in Kokborok is a special case. In Bodo and Garo, the reflexives (*gau* 'self' in Bodo and *an-thaŋ* '3-self' in Garo) occur only in the simplex form, unlike in Kokborok. As mentioned above, Kokborok has both simplex and complex reflexives and both have two forms each. The simple reflexive allows violation of Principle A in infinitives (cf. (28)–(29)). The complex reflexive behaves differently as one of the complex forms shows an apparent violation of Principle A, but the other does not.

Examples (30)-(35) illustrate non-local binding in Bodo and Garo. Examples (30) and (31) are, respectively, cases of local binding in Bodo and Garo; (32) and (33) are examples of the small clause in Bodo and Garo, where the subject antecedent is nominative case-marked for both, and the reflexives *gau* 'self' in Bodo (cf. (32)) and *an-thaŋ* '3-self' in Garo (cf. (33)) are accusative case-marked by the matrix verb.

(30) *mala_i-ya   gau_i-khəu aina-yao   nu-dəŋ-mən*
     Mala-NOM self-ACC   mirror-LOC see-PERF-PST
     'Mala saw herself in the mirror.'

(31) *lakman_i   an-thaŋ_i-na ca tariaha*
     Lakman.NOM 3-self-DAT   tea made
     'Lakman made tea for himself.'

(32) *kamala_i-ya   gau_i-khəu-nə   somaina san-ə*
     Kamala-NOM self-ACC-EMPH pretty   consider-PRES
     'Kamala only considers herself pretty.'

(33) *dokatchi_i   an-thaŋ_i-ko caŋroa ine canci-a*
     Dokatchi.NOM 3-self-ACC   tall   like consider-PRES
     'Dokatchi considers herself tall.'

In (34) and (35), the antecedent of the reflexive can either be the subject of the matrix clause or of the embedded clause i.e., PRO, which, in turn, is co-indexed with the object of the matrix clause. The co-indexation of the Bodo reflexive *gau* in (34) and Garo reflexive *an-thaŋ* in (35) with the matrix subject leads to non-local binding.

(34) *mala_i-ya   kamala_k-khəu [PRO_k gau_{k/j}-nə saha phuduŋ-nə] thin-dəŋ-mən*
     Mala-NOM Kamala-ACC   self-DAT tea   prepare-INF ask-PERF-PST
     'Mala asked Kamala to prepare tea for herself.'

(35) *lakman_i   gopal_k-ko   [PRO_k an-thaŋ_{i/k}-na ca tari-cina] aganaha*
     Lakman.NOM Gopal-ACC   3-self-DAT   tea make-INF asked
     'Lakman asked Gopal to make tea for himself.'

4.4 An account of non-local binding in Kokborok

Non-local/Long-distance binding of the simple reflexive is found in many languages such as Japanese, Chinese and in many South Asian languages such as Hindi-Urdu, Assamese, etc.[9] Long-distance binding seems to be a clear violation of Principle A.[10] However, this is actually not the case in certain approaches to binding. Cole & Sung (1994) and Davison (2001) provide a so-called head-to-head movement analysis to show that long-distance binding of the simple reflexive is actually reduced to local binding, and thus conforms to Principle A.

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9. See the many contributions in Lust et al. (2000).

10. The conditions under which non-local binding in Germanic languages is allowed might differ, but the simple-complex opposition was quite early on observed (Hellan 1986; Everaert 1986).

Cole & Sung's (1994) analysis of Chinese reflexives, in essence, assumes the following: (i) simple reflexives are heads (X°), while complex reflexives are XPs, (ii) covert head-movement of the simple reflexive (in Chinese *ziji* 'self', for instance) to the functional category AGR, (iii) and subsequent successive head-to-head movement, (iv) leading to a configuration in which the antecedent and the reflexive occupy the same local domain. Abstracting away from technicalities, the gist of the analysis is given in (36).

(36)   a.   *Zhangsan$_i$ renwei Lisi$_j$ zhidao Wangwuk xihuan ziji$_{i/j/k}$.*
            Zhangsan think Lisi know Wangwu like   self
            'Zhangsan thinks that Lisi knows that Wangwu likes him/himself.'

                                                            (Cole & Sung (1994: 355))

       b.   [Zhangsan$_i$ **ziji**$_i$-AGR renwei [Lisi **e**$_i$-AGR zhidao [Wangwu **e**$_i$-AGR
            xihuan **e**$_i$]]]

The reflexive *ziji* can be bound by any of the subjects in the sentence, local and non-local, including the matrix subject *Zhangsan* (cf. 36a). The X°-reflexive *ziji* in the embedded non-finite clause is successively adjoined to the functional head AGR in its own clause, then to the intermediate AGR-nodes, and finally to matrix AGR-node, where it enters into a head-specifier relation with the subject *Zhangasan* (cf. 36b). Given that the Head-Movement Constraint (cf. Baker 1988) does not allow an XP category to adjoin to the X° category AGR (or other heads) and to undergo further adjunction, it follows that complex reflexives don't allow non-local binding.

For Hindi-Urdu, Davison (2001: 59) suggests a slightly different mechanism in the analysis of long-distance binding of simple reflexives.[11] She suggests a mechanism where the simple reflexive cliticizes with the embedded INFL instead of the embedded AGR and through successive head-to-head movement reaches the higher INFL. She does so because of the different morpho-syntactic status of the inflectional categories in Chinese and Hindi-Urdu. Subbārāo (2012: 77) suggests that Davison's analysis of head-to-head movement holds for all the South Asian languages that exhibit long-distance binding and have agreement. We follow this conclusion and account for long-distance binding of the simple reflexive in Kokborok along the lines of Davison's analysis. A head-movement analysis along the lines of Davison (2001) is represented in (37). The simple reflexive *sak* or *baithaŋ*

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11. Davison (2001: 77–78) claims that "AGR plays no essential role in reflexive binding in this language [= Hindi-Urdu]." Davison argues that the fact that AGR features cannot check all the subject cases restricts the applicability of Cole & Sung's analysis to languages which exhibit overt cases of subjects, being different from Chinese which does not exhibit any overt distinction between nominative and other cases.

first moves to the non-finite INFL of the embedded clause, and then by successive cyclic movement, it moves to the finite INFL of the matrix clause and, thus, is locally bound by the subject of the matrix clause, satisfying Principle A, as formulated above.

(37) a. *khumti$_i$ khumpui$_j$-nɔ* [PRO$_j$ *sak$_{i/j}$-nɔ khicik-nani] sa-kha.*
      Khumti Khumpui-ACC REFL-ACC   pinch-INF   tell-PST
      'Khumti$_i$ asked Khumpui$_j$ to pinch self$_{i/j}$.'
   b. [khumti$_i$ [VP khumpui$_j$-nɔ [$_{CP}$ PRO$_j$ **e**$_i$-nɔ khicik **sak**$_i$-[nani]$_{INFL\text{-}infin}$] sa **sak**$_i$-[kha]$_{INFL\text{-}past}$]]

4.5 Non-local binding of the complex reflexive in Kokborok

As illustrated above, Kokborok has two forms of the complex reflexive: *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ*. How do they behave with regard to non-local/long-distance binding? Examples (38) and (39) show that long-distance binding is blocked with *sak sak*, thus conforming to Principle A.

(38) *khumti$_i$ khumpui$_j$-nɔ* [PRO$_j$ *sak sak*$^{*}_{i/j}$-nɔ khicik-nani] sa-kha.*
     Khumti Khumpui-ACC   REFL-ACC   pinch-INF   tell-PST
     'Khumti$_i$ asked Khumpui$_j$ to pinch self$^{*}_{i/j}$.'

(39) *phiyɔgnai$_i$ khumti$_j$-nɔ* [PRO$_j$ *sak sak*$^{*}_{i/j}$-ni bagɨi ca sinam-nani] sa-kha.*
     Phiyoknai Khumti-ACC   REFL-GEN   for tea make-INF   tell-PST
     'Phiyoknai$_i$ asked Khumti$_j$ to make tea for self$^{*}_{i/j}$.'

In contrast, (40) and (41) show that the form *sak baithaŋ* permits long-distance binding thereby leading to a Principle A violation.

(40) *khumti$_i$ khumpui$_j$-nɔ* [PRO$_j$ *sak baithaŋ$_{i/j}$-nɔ khicik-nani] sa-kha.*
     Khumti Khumpui-ACC   self self-ACC   pinch-INF   tell-PST
     'Khumti$_i$ asked Khumpui$_j$ to pinch self$_{i/j}$.'

(41) *phiyɔgnaii khumtij-nɔ* [PRO$_j$ *sak baithaŋ$_{i/j}$-ni bagɨi ca sinam-nani] sa-kha.*
     Phiyoknai Khumti-ACC   self self-GEN   for tea make-INF   tell-PST
     'Phiyoknai$_i$ asked Khumti$_j$ to make tea for self$_{i/j}$.'

Note that the illustrations of non-local/long-distance binding presented in this paper bear evidence of the phenomenon that any instance of long-distance binding almost always involves local binding too but not vice versa.[12] For example, (38)

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12. Non-local binding of simplex reflexives does not necessarily imply that local binding is allowed (cf. Everaert 1986). But in the case of complex reflexives it is always the case that non-

and (39) show that local binding does not imply long-distance binding, whereas (36), (40) and (41) imply that long-distance binding mandatorily involves local binding.

The head-to-head movement analysis that can account for the cases of non-local binding of the simple reflexive predicts binding of a complex reflexive to be impossible. The reason is that these 'complex' reflexives are supposed to be non-heads/phrasal and, therefore, not allowing head-movement. Given what we observed in ((38)–(39)) that is not the case. Let us, therefore, go back to the morpho-syntactic properties of these 'complex' reflexives.

5.   Explorations

In the preceding section, we have explained that the head-movement analysis of Davison, couched within a classical Binding Theory approach,[13] seems to make the wrong prediction when we focus on the non-local binding of complex reflexives. That is, if we assume that both *sak sak* and *sak baithaŋ* are indeed 'complex' reflexives, non-local binding is unexpected. Given the grammaticality of (40–41) one would have to argue that *sak baithaŋ* is not complex, and therefore a head/not phrasal, while *sak sak* would have to be taken as complex, a non-head/phrasal. So, the question is whether there are arguments that would help us decide on this issue.

5.1   *sak baithaŋ*

Let us first concentrate on the reflexive *sak baithaŋ*, a combination of *sak* meaning 'body' and *baithaŋ* meaning 'self'. Jacquesson (2008: 74) takes *sak baithaŋ* as a 'compounded phrase' and translates it as 'personal self'. Suppose, however, it is not 'phrasal' but is a case of semantic reduplication, or, what Inkelas & Zoll (2005) call synonym compounds. They describe synonym compounds as having two members of the compound that are synonyms (perhaps etymologically distinct), exhibiting semantic identity, but phonologically distinct. We illustrate the phenomenon with a Hindi-Urdu example from Singh (2005: 271):

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local binding is accompanied by local binding. Discussion of this would go too far given the present discussion.

13.   It should be noted that the binding theory developed in Reuland (2011, 2017a) addresses the permissibility of long-distance binding of the complex reflexive by distinguishing two features of reflexivity: 'enforcing reflexivity' and 'licensing reflexivity'. If a reflexive doesn't enforce reflexivity, non-local binding is permitted. We will not adopt and discuss that theory fully here.

(42)   *tan   badan tan.badan*
       body body   'body'
       (+native) (−native)

We have observed that Kokborok has such compounds (43), so it would be possible to analyse *sak baithaŋ* like this.

(43)   *kailai   bɔrlai*
       marriage wedding
       'wedding'

If *sak baithaŋ* would be a case of a synonym compound, it would indeed be a head, and, therefore, 'non-complex' in the sense required by the movement analysis. The fact that non-local binding is allowed in ((40)–(41)) follows straightforwardly.

5.2   *sak sak*

Let us recapitulate why *sak sak* would be simplex or complex. Its phonological form, and the fact that *sak* itself is also a reflexive, suggests a form of reduplication. But is it a standard reduplication (44a), a morphological process, or is it a case of syntactic reduplication (cf. (44b); Stolz 2009) – also called repetition or doubling?

(44)   a. $[_{word}$ morph] => $[_{word}$ morph morph]
       b. $[_{word}$ morph] => $[_{phrase}$ $[_{word}$ morph] $[_{word}$ morph]]

If *sak sak* would be a case of 'regular' reduplication (44a), it would mean it is a head, and therefore, contrary to the fact, it allows non-local binding. So, suppose *sak sak* is a case of syntactic reduplication. This is what seems to be happening in Telugu (Sarju Devi & Subbārāo 2002) and Manipuri (cf. (45)): the two elements get their own case (showing that it cannot be a case of morphological reduplication).[14]

(45)   *i-sa-na   i-sa-bu*
       I-self-NOM I-self-ACC
       'myself'

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14. The Mizo reflexive is another case of syntactic reduplication (Lalitha Murthy & Subbārāo 2000:779):

   (i)   *a-māh   leh   a-māh*
         3SG-self and 3SG-self

In the case of Kokborok such an analysis is not immediately straightforward: the case marking on *sak sak*, which is either accusative *-nɔ* or genitive *-ni*, is right peripheral. Swapping of the parts of the reflexive – a sign of phrasal status – is not permitted (cf. (10)): the forms are fixed as *sak sak-nɔ/ni*. This is, however, in itself not a proof that it is not phrasal. There are languages where both elements in a bipartite reflexive receive case – only possible if they are phrasal – but swapping is still not allowed. (Tsaxur (Lyutikova 2000); Hinuq (Forker 2014)). Moreover, do note that in Subbārāo et.al. (2010) a case of swapping in Kokborok is given:

(46) *maŋ-nug-ɔ   aŋ sak-nɔ-sak   nuk-kha.*
      appearance-look-in I   REFL-ACC-REFL see-PST
      'I saw myself in the mirror'

In our fieldwork, we did not find any proof that swapping (like in Example (46)) was possible. We rechecked (46) with our informants, and they repeated that it was not OK, but two respondents added that if it is heard people would understand it. Could it, therefore, be the case that the language is changing, due to language contact? In such cases, we need corpora to establish that this is indeed the case. We will leave that to future research.

One should be aware of the fact that both Bangla and Kokborok are the official languages of Tripura, out of which Bangla is the dominant language. Now note that in standard Bangla the reflexive is like in (47) (Sengupta 2000).

(47) a. *mukul   nije-ke   doš   dicche.*
          muluk.NOM self-SG.DAT blame is_giving
      b. *mukul   nije-ke   nije doš   dicche.*
          muluk.NOM self-SG.DAT self blame is_giving
          'Mukul is blaming himself.'

In the case of (47b), the first *nije* is the case marked reflexive and the second *nije* is an emphatic.[15] It is a reasonable conjecture that the example in (46) might be a case of analogy influenced by Bangla. To be more precise, the variety of Bangla spoken in Agartala (the capital of Tripura) is different from the standard Bangla spoken in Kolkata (the capital of West Bengal and some neighbouring districts). So, observe the relevant examples in (48) and (49):[16]

(48) a. *tumar   nize-re nize-oi   prɔšɔŋša kɔr-te oi-b-ɔ.*
          you.GEN self-ACC self-EMPH praise   do-INF be-FUT-3
          'You will have to do praise yourself.'

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15. We have copied the glossing from the original article.

16. Example given by the first author, checked with some other native speakers.

b. *tumar   nize-re-oi   prɔšɔŋša kɔr-te oi-b-ɔ.*
you.GEN self-ACC-EMPH praise   do-INF be-FUT-3
'You will have to praise only yourself.'

(49) a. *ami nize nize-re ayna-t   dek-s-i.*
I   self self-ACC mirror-in see-PERF.PRES-1

b. *ami nize-re nize ayna-t   dek-s-i.*
I   self-ACC self mirror-in see-PERF.PRES-1
'I saw myself in the mirror.'

So, while Sengupta gives no example of swapping between the reflexive (case marked) and the emphatic, Example (49) from the Bangla spoken in Agartala does.

The upshot is that the reflexive *sak sak* in Kokborok could be phrasal, just like (some of) the reflexive forms in Bangla (49a, b) even though not clearly visible through case marking, or the lack of swapping. Further research would be needed to support this line of argumentation.

Note that in Section 4.1 we noticed a significant fact about the Kokborok reflexives that should not be forgotten: *sak baithaŋ* occurs in a non-subcategorized position in contrast to *sak sak*, which cannot occur in a non-subcategorized position (cf. (23)–(24)). What do these facts indicate? According to Subbārāo (2012: 83) complex anaphors do not occur in a non-subcategorized position in South Asian languages. If we take that observation as correct, the hypothesis we formulated that the reflexive *sak baithaŋ* is non-complex fits with the observation that it occurs in a non-subcategorized position, in contrast to *sak-sak*, which we hypothesized to be complex, restricting its distribution to a subcategorized position.

5.3   An alternative

Above, we have sketched how we could address the problem Kokborok raises for those binding theories that treat non-local binding as the result of head-movement. To repeat the gist of the analysis: non-local binding is only possible because the reflexive 'covertly' (at an abstract level of logical form) moves – as the result of head-to-head movement – to the matrix clause, so that reflexive is locally bound by its antecedent. But such a thing can only happen if the reflexive is a head (X°) itself. This way complex vs simple is morpho-syntactically defined: phrasal vs head.

However, we must realize that the analysis is based on a long-standing strong cross-linguistic generalization, first formulated by Yang (1983): only simplex reflexives allow non-local binding. This approach was later developed in the work

by Battistella (1987, 1989); Pica (1987). However, originally it was only simply a descriptive statement, and later the head-movement approach gave a theoretical basis for the observation. But now it has become increasingly clear that the descriptive statement, although quite strong, is not without exceptions.

If we limit ourselves to SALs, Marathi as discussed in Wali (2000: 534) and Subbārāo (2012: 77) and Malayalam in (Jayaseelan 1997) are the languages within the SALs allowing the complex reflexive – *āplyā swatāh-lā* 'self self-ACC' in Marathi and *tan-ne tanne* in Malayalam – to take part in non-local binding.

But other cases have been documented. Lee (2001: 385) demonstrates that out of the two types of complex reflexives in Korean namely, *caki casin*[17] and *kucasin* (compound of a regular pronoun and reflexive *casin*), the former is bound by local antecedent as in (50) and the latter is bound by both local and non-local antecedents as in (51)[18].

(50) *yenghuy$_i$-nun bob$_j$-i   caki casin$_{*i/j}$-ul salangha-ko iss-ta-ko*
Yenghuy-TOP Bob-NOM self self-ACC   love-GER   exist-DECL-COMP
mit-nun-ta.
believe-PRES-DECL
'Yenghuy believes that Bob loves self self.'

(51) *swunye-nim$_i$-un [nay$_j$-ka kunyecasin$_i$-ul pwulsinha-ko iss-ta-ko]*
nun-HON-TOP I-NOM herself-ACC   distrust-GER exist-DECL-COMP
sayngkakha-n-ta.
think-PRES-DECL
Literally: *'The nun thinks that I distrust herself.'

And as a last case, note that Cole & Sung's (1994) analysis, later copied for other languages, was based on the difference between the Chinese 'simple' reflexive *ziji* and the 'complex reflexive ta *ziji*: the former allowing non-local binding; the latter not. For Chinese it has recently become clear that *ziji* is actually morphologically complex;[19] as such the analysis Cole & Sung (1994) propose is not straightforward anymore.

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17. Lee (2001) reports that for some native speakers of Korean long-distance binding of *caki casin* in (42) acceptable.

18. We have minimally changed the original glossing, using the Leipzig Glossing rules. We thank John Whitman.

19. Liu (2016); Wong (2017) and Reuland et. al. (2019) capitalize on a point that had been previously observed that *ziji* contains *zi-*, independently occurring as a reflexivizing verbal prefix. Moreover, it has been observed that classical Chinese has a pronominal stem *-ji*. Putting these observations together allows for an analysis that *zi-ji* is morphologically complex.

So, the question might be whether we need to look at the complex/simple dichotomy in another way. We will briefly outline such an approach. Several studies, such as Lee (2001); Schadler (2014); Reuland (2017a) and others, distinguish between two features of reflexivity: one which enforces reflexivity and the other which licenses reflexivity. Enforcing reflexivity means that the reflexive argument necessarily turns the predicate into a reflexive predicate, triggering local binding, and only local binding, disallowing non-local binding. Licensing reflexivity (a feature of what Schadler 2014 called semi-reflexives) means that the reflexive argument may turn the predicate into a reflexive predicate, but not necessarily. So local binding is possible, but non-local binding is also possible. Summarizing it for Kokborok it would mean that *sak baithaŋ* only licenses reflexivity, while *sak-sak* enforces reflexivity. Such differential behavior is due to the nature of the strength of the reflexive: *sak baithaŋ* is different in terms of its syntactic nature and it is 'less strong' in degree in its anaphoric strength in comparison to *sak-sak* that is 'fully strong'.

We will not go into the (technical) details, but in such an approach it becomes important to understand what features are responsible for making a reflexive of the enforcing or licensing type. One feature springs to mind, the level of grammaticalization. Reflexives that are derived from body part nouns, like Kokborok *sak*, are enforcing reflexives if fully grammaticalized, but licensing anaphors if not fully grammaticalized.[20]

6.   Conclusion

The paper aims at providing an account of the binding strategies of reflexives in Kokborok. Kokborok has only nominal reflexive which is of two types: simple and complex. Like other languages, simple reflexive in Kokborok conforms to Principle A of Binding Theory, whereas one of the forms of complex reflexive violates Principle A. Complex reflexives in Kokborok are of two types: *sak sak* 'self' (reduplication of the word *sak* 'body') and *sak baithaŋ* 'self' (compound of two words *sak* 'body' and *baithaŋ* 'self'). The form *sak sak* 'self' strictly follows Principle A, whereas *sak baithaŋ* 'self' does not as it allows long-distance binding. We have discussed several ways of explaining why the two reflexives might behave

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20.   The fact that simple form *sak* does not occur as an emphatic marker (cf. 13), and *baithaŋ* does (cf. 14), remains unexplained. While the lone *baithaŋ* can occur as emphatic, the lone *sak* cannot. We do not at this stage know how such difference can be explicated in terms of the relative strength of *sak* and *baithaŋ*.

differently, and we hope to have paved the way for future research explaining the exceptional behavior of Kokborok reflexives.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	HON	honorific
ACC	accusative	INF	infinitive
AGR	agreement	NOM	nominative
COMP	complementizer	PERF	perfective aspect
CPM	conjunctive participle marker	PRES	present
DAT	dative	PROG	progressive
DECL	declarative	PST	past
EM.PRED	predicate of emotion	REFL	reflexive
EMPH	emphatic	SG	singular
ERG	ergative	TOP	topic
FUT	future	GER	gerund
GEN	genitive		

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